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ABSTRACT

Employing a process model of political recruitment, this study investigated the relative impact of a school system's social, economic, and political structure on school board member recruitment. Process data were collected by means of structured interviews with school board candidates in a stratified sample of systems. Structural data were drawn from government documents, schools system records, and reports of political activities. The global hypothesis of the study, which predicted a relationship between the social, economic, and political structure of school systems and patterns of school board member recruitment, was confirmed. (Author)

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THE ECOLOGICAL BASIS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT

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In any political system, political roles must be defined, occupied, and vacated. Elite recruitment--or political recruitment as it is more commonly termed--is the process that selects individuals for specific political roles. "The political recruitment function," wrote Almond and Coleman, "takes up where the general political socialization function leaves off. It recruits members of the particular subcultures--religious communities, statuses, classes, ethnic communities and the like, and inducts them into the specialized roles of the political system."[1]

Political recruitment is a basic "life process" of the political system. If the system is to persist and maintain an adaptive capacity, institutionalized means must exist for the continual renewal of elites and the constant flow of personnel into essential political roles to replace those who retire, die, or fail to retain office.

As a central function of the political system, the process of recruitment is a key indicator of the values and distribution of influence within the system. As Seligman observed:

> As a dependent variable, elite recruitment expresses...the value system, the types of representation, and the articulation of social stratification with the political status system. As a factor that effects change, the pattern of elite recruitment defines avenues for political activity and status. These paths to political positions influence the distribution of status and prestige, as well as economic and political policies.[2]

Because of its critical importance to the maintenance and viability of the system, political recruitment has received the sustained attention of political analysts from Plato to the present.[3] Systematic quantitative studies of recruitment during the last two decades have independently retraced and extended earlier lines of inquiry.[4] These investigations have emphasized the

role of elites, their social background and career ladders, and their distinctive personality traits.[5] The cumulative result is that much is known about the structure and distribution of power and influence in several societies as well as the social and ideological composition of political leadership strata.

But although this genre of research is significant in its own right, it yields little effective understanding of political recruitment as a dynamic process. In focusing on the individual political career--on who is selected for leadership roles--it fails to provide insights into the process by which this happens. Preoccupation with the "who" obscures the "how", precluding analysis of recruitment as a collective and systemic phenomenon that is conditioned by the sociopolitical system within which it occurs.

Thus, historically, studies of school board member recruitment have tended to approach recruitment as an individual phenomenon rather than a systemic one. Since Counts rendered his seminal account of the socioeconomic composition of school boards in 1927,[6] the typical study has treated recruitment as an aggregate variable and compared the socioeconomic attributes of school board members with the demographic profile of their constituents.[7] Inferences are then drawn about the boards' statistical representativeness or malrepresentativeness. Still other studies have plumbed the motivations and attitudes of school board members and related these to their role conceptions and policy orientations.[8] All of these studies are characterized by the individualistic assumptions they make with regard to school board member recruitment.

While it is important to understand the socioeconomic and ideological attributes of school board members as well as their motivations and attitudinal sets, this kind of documentation hardly serves to illuminate

the social and political processes that constitute the recruitment phenomenon. For instance, there is preponderant evidence that school board members come disproportionately from the upper social-status strata of society and that this demographic malrepresentation is a characteristic feature of educational governance systems throughout North America and elsewhere. But high social status alone does not ensure recruitment. For even though the upper strata are overrepresented, only a tiny fraction of the members of the upper strata become members of the school board. Obviously, factors other than social status operate to reduce the pool of those eligible to a small number of potential aspirants and a smaller number of successful candidates.

A more viable approach to the study of recruitment is one that treats recruitment as an emergent property of the sociopolitical system.[9] Conceived in this way, recruitment is a phenomenon that takes shape and meaning from its relationship to the system's structure and functioning. This perspective shifts attention away from the individual career and directs it primarily towards the sociopolitical matrix within which recruitment patterns are determined. The most coherent explication and systematic operationalization of this conception of recruitment is found in the research program of Eulau and Prewitt and their colleagues in connection with their City Council Research Project[10] and in that of Seligman and his colleagues in connection with their analysis of patterns of legislative recruitment in Oregon.[11]

This line of inquiry, which sharply departs from the conventional nature of studies of school board member recruitment, was pursued in recent research conducted by Jennings and Zeigler[12] and by Cistone.[13] In independent but related studies they traced the social and political processes that interactively and successively narrow the population of a community to the very few citizens who are elected to the school board. In each case the findings

suggest that recruitment patterns are conditioned by factors in the socio-political system within which they emerge.

Of the several dimensions of the sociopolitical system, ecological structure--the distribution and diversity of the population within a geopolitical unit--has long been recognized by social scientists as a major conditioning factor bearing on community processes. Some recent community studies point to ecological structure as the single most important determinant of both political processes and policy outputs.[14] In the present study, we attempted to assess the impact of ecological structure on patterns of school board member recruitment, a relationship that has not been previously explored. Our conception of recruitment as a systemic phenomenon led us to reason that patterns of school board member recruitment would be functionally related to the ecological structure of the school district.

Theoretical Considerations

The Process of Recruitment

Like any social process, recruitment is a series of ongoing activities and events that are directed toward some specific end during a finite period of time.[15] As commonly understood in the social sciences, recruitment differs from simple change in that it denotes structure, regularity, predictability, and the temporal ordering of activities and events. When the recruitment process is observed at different points in time the actors may vary but their patterns of interaction are channeled in particular ways and toward particular ends. The interactions are purposive; they are specific to recruitment; and they are different from those found in other types of social processes.

Since recruitment is a dynamic process it is difficult to capture its temporal aspects. But for analytical purposes it may be subdivided into three distinct stages. During each of these stages distinctive patterns of

interaction occur that may be termed 1) instigation, 2) support, and 3) selection.

Instigation is the initial stage, during which a prospective candidate decides to run for office. When the initiative to run comes from the candidate himself, he can be said to be self-recruited (i.e., he is a self-starter). When the initiative to run is primarily the result of the explicit encouragement of others (especially the explicit urging of a favorably disposed candidate), he can be said to be other-recruited; in this case the decision to run for office is a collective one, the culmination of a social screening process involving the candidate and the individuals and groups who encourage him to run. From a pool of potential aspirants, then, certain individuals emerge as candidates (either self-recruited or other-recruited) during the instigation stage.

During the second or support stage, resources are marshaled in an effort to influence the electors. During this stage a candidate may act alone or he may collaborate with individuals and groups to secure from them such resources as advice, manpower, or material support.

The selection stage is most critical in the recruitment process. It is at this point that the electors choose from among the candidates. Electors are determined by both the legal code, which defines who may vote, and informal criteria that influence whether or not those qualified actually do vote.

Although all declared candidates for election to the school board pass through these three stages of recruitment, the patterns of interactions among participants--candidates, instigators, supporters, and electors--during each of the stages is not the same across all school districts. In an attempt to account for this variation, attention was directed to the hypothesized interrelationship between recruitment and ecological structure.

Recruitment and Ecological Structure

As previously stated, in this study recruitment was conceptualized as an emergent property of the sociopolitical system. As such, recruitment was seen as taking shape and meaning from its relationship to the structure and functioning of that system.

Obviously, this treatment of recruitment shifts attention away from the properties of individual school board members (e.g., their particular socio-economic, psychological, or political traits) and even the aggregate properties of members of a given school board. The focus of attention is primarily on the properties and characteristics of the sociopolitical system itself.

That recruitment may and should be conceptualized at the system level, rather than at the individual level, was demonstrated in the analysis of the interrelationship between representation and recruitment reported by Prewitt and Eulau.[16] As a point of departure they argued that the tendency of scholars to treat recruitment (and representation) as an individual characteristic "blocks theorizing activity and empirical research which could connect recruitment and representation." Having elaborated the notion that recruitment is a public and systemic phenomenon, they hypothesized that it would be related to other system properties. Their empirical analysis revealed that, at least in the case of city councilmen, recruitment patterns were indeed tied to other system properties, such as community size and support, amount of sponsorship, and electoral conflict.

Other empirical studies have specifically addressed the systemic relationship between recruitment and ecological structure, and have demonstrated that it is the ecological structure of the electoral district that influences recruitment patterns.[17] The greater the ecological diversity,

the sharper and more numerous are the interests and issues that divide the constituency; and each social or economic cleavage in effect serves as a focal point for candidacy, as a basis of support, as a criterion for selection. Looking at it another way, the number and heterogeneity of the participants in the recruitment phenomenon are a reflection of the extent of the cleavages within the constituency. Moreover, as the diversity of the constituency increases, so also does the complexity of the interactions among the participants. Extending this line of research, King[18] found that the interactions of the recruitment process are produced by the number and pattern of sites of meaningful political competition in an electoral district, which are predetermined by ecological structure.

Certainly not all of the properties of the sociopolitical system are likely to be equally relevant to recruitment. But there is widespread agreement among social scientists who are interested in the recruitment phenomenon, as evidenced in the previously cited researches, that the ecological structure of the electoral district is a key determinant of recruitment patterns. Proceeding on the assumption that school board member recruitment is a systemic phenomenon, as is political recruitment more generally conceived, this study treated the ecological structure of the school district as an independent variable by which recruitment patterns were expected to be conditioned.

Index of Ecological Structure

As defined earlier, ecological structure refers to the distribution and diversity of the population within a geopolitical unit, in this case the school district. Ecological structure is a first-order system property that can be measured with relevant indicators.

The measure of population diversity that was employed in this study

was Lieberson's A_w--diversity within a population--as applied to polytomous variables.[19] Viewing diversity as the position of a population along a homogeneity-heterogeneity continuum, Lieberson proposed a general method for describing diversity within a population with respect to one or more qualitative variables. Diversity is operationally defined as the probability of obtaining unlike characteristics when two persons are randomly paired. The measure is readily interpretable in probability terms since it represents the proportion of characteristics in which a randomly selected pair of individuals will differ, assuming sampling with replacement. That is, if an infinite number of pairs were selected randomly from a finite population, the average proportion of unshared characteristics of these pairs would be A_w.[20]

This method was used in the present study to measure population diversity within seventy-six school districts. An A_w was computed for each school district, and differences among school districts were interpreted in probability terms. Table 1 presents sixteen categories and six variables upon which the diversity index was based.[21] The computation formula is as follows:

$$A_w = 1 - \left(\sum_{k=1}^{p} Y_k^2 \Big/ V \right)$$

where Y_k = the proportion of the population falling in a given category within each of the variables,

V = the number of variables, and

p = total number of categories within all of the variables.

The index has an upper limit of 1.0 and a lower limit of 0. The higher the value, the greater is the diversity of the population within a given school district. For instance, a school district with an index value of .75 has a much more heterogeneous population, on the basis of our six variables, than

TABLE 1

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VARIABLES INCLUDED IN DIVERSITY INDEX

1. Education Variable:
   a) Less than eight years of education
   b) More than eight years of education but did not finish high school
   c) High school education
   d) College education

2. Income Variable:
   a) Families than earn less than $8,000 a year
   b) Families than earn between $8,000 and $12,000 a year
   c) Families than earn over $12,000 a year

3. Occupation Variable:
   a) White-collar occupations
   b) Other occupations

4. Housing Variable:
   a) Home Ownership
   b) Renter occupied

5. Ethnic Variable:
   a) Foreign stock
   b) Native stock

6. Religion Variable:
   a) Jewish
   b) Catholic
   c) Protestant and Other

one with an index value of .25. In the former, on the average, two randomly selected residents would differ on 75 percent of the characteristics; in the latter, on the average, on 25 percent of the characteristics.

A second component of ecological structure, in addition to diversity, is the distribution of the population. The measure of population distribution that was employed in this study is based on two factors: 1) the percentage of the total enumerated school district population classified as "urban population" according to the standard census definition; and 2) the percentage of the same enumerated population located in centers of 5,000 or more. These factors are obviously intended to tap the density and spatial proximity dimensions of population distribution and are commonly used by social scientists as measures of urbanism.[22] For the purposes of this study, the population distribution index value was computed for each school district by summing the two percentages and then dividing by 200. Accordingly, the index has an upper limit of 1.0 and a lower limit of 0. The higher the value, the more urban the population distribution.

A composite index of ecological structure was constructed from the population distribution and population diversity indices. The individual ranks of each school district for each of the two indices were summed and then divided by two in order to arrive at a composite ecological structure rank. That the two measures may be justifiably combined, from a statistical point of view, is demonstrated by a rank-order correlation coefficient of the two indices of .87. In terms of the composite rank-ordering, the higher the rank of a school district, the more urban and heterogeneous its ecological structure; the lower the rank, the more rural and homogeneous its ecological structure.

The Hypotheses

Our basic theoretical interest in this study was whether patterns of school board member recruitment are functionally related to the ecological structure of school districts. Our conception of recruitment as a systemic phenomenon suggested the general hypothesis that ecological structure is a major conditioning factor in recruitment. Accordingly, we formulated six hypotheses that predicted particular relationships during each of the three stages of the recruitment process.

The Instigation Stage

> Hypothesis 1: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will be recruited by others to a greater extent than will their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous school districts.
>
> Hypothesis 2: Sponsorship of school board candidates by incumbents will be practiced to a greater extent in rural/homogeneous school districts than in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

The rationale for the formulation of Hypothesis 1 was that in rural/homogeneous school districts the style of politics, like the style of life, is more personal than in urban/heterogeneous districts. Since the former is more closely knit and forces a larger proportion of its residents to interact with one another in more diverse situations, face-to-face relationships are most important and the cross-cutting status-sets are dense.[23] Competition for office may threaten to disrupt such primary relationships and result in the creation of undesirable personal animosities. In such settings "it is reasonable to assume that the value attached to being a good neighbor--and the rewards of amicable intra-community relations--is greater than the rationally perceived gain from various conflicts [over issues]."[24] In the urban/heterogeneous environments, candidates are attracted by the non-political benefits that office-seeking affords (e.g., name recognition and

self-advertisement); but there are few such benefits in the rural/homogeneous environment, and in general only strong instigation and encouragement from relevant others will convince an individual to incur the high social costs of office-seeking. By contrast, there are strong incentives to candidacy in the urban/heterogeneous areas. Not only are there both political and non-political benefits, but the social and economic cleavages within the population provide potential focal points for candidacy and bases of support. Because of such incentives there is in these settings a propensity for self-recruitment.

The rationale for the formulation of Hypothesis 2 was that in rural/homogeneous school districts the disinclination to office-seeking and minimal electoral competition are reinforced by the fact that the politically active stratum is relatively small and functions as an extended primary group. In such districts, where individuals likely share each other's characteristics and value systems, sponsorship would be practiced more extensively by incumbents.[25]

The Support Stage

> Hypothesis 3: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will receive greater campaign support from primary groups than will their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous school districts.
>
> Hypothesis 4: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will receive greater campaign support from secondary groups than will their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

The rationale for the formulation of Hypotheses 3 and 4 was that patterns of support will parallel patterns of instigation. Accordingly, in rural/homogeneous school districts, where other-instigated rather than self-instigated candidacy is the modal pattern, both primary and secondary groups will continue to encourage and support the candidate. However, in the urban/heterogeneous districts infrequent instigation by others will be followed by

negligible support from any group.

The Selection Stage

> Hypothesis 5: Uncontested school board elections will occur to a greater extent in rural/homogeneous school districts than in urban/heterogeneous school districts.
>
> Hypothesis 6: Forced turnover of incumbent school board members will occur to a greater extent in urban/hetergeneous school districts than in rural/homogeneous school districts.

The rationale for the formulation of Hypothesis 5 was that competition for election to the school board will be less intense in rural/homogeneous school districts than in urban/heterogeneous districts. Weak incentives to seek office and relatively low potential for political conflict generate relatively fewer candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous areas and proportionately more elections go uncontested. On the other hand, the urban/heterogeneous district is characterized by strong incentives to candidacy with each of the many cleavages representing a potential focal point for candidacy and a basis of support. Electoral competition is determined by the range and intensity of these cleavages and is much keener.

The rationale for the formulation of Hypothesis 6 was that in urban/heterogeneous school districts incumbent school board members are exposed to powerful pressures exerted by cross-cutting interests and cleavages within the population. The more diverse the interests and cleavages, the more diverse the organized factions in the electorate and the less cohesive the majority faction, if it exists at all. Under such conditions forced turnover will increase. The rural/homogeneous environments are more consensual and cohesive and less likely to evict incumbents, and elections are less likely to be used as sanctioning mechanisms.

Procedures

Data for this study were collected on two major sets of variables: the process of recruitment and the structural parameters of recruitment. The sources of data and the methods of collection differed for each major set of variables.

The process data were generated by means of structured interviews with sixty neophyte school board members within the month following their election in a sample of thirty school systems in the province of Ontario. To obtain the sample, all seventy-six public boards of education in the province were rank-ordered on the basis of the composite index of the ecological structure of the school district (the higher the rank, the more urban/heterogeneous its ecological structure; the lower the rank, the more rural/homogeneous its ecological structure). A subsample of the fifteen highest-ranking and fifteen lowest-ranking school districts was then drawn, to yield the fifteen most urban/heterogeneous and the fifteen most rural/homogeneous. Since at least two neophyte members were elected in each of these thirty school districts, two respondents could be drawn from each. (Where more than two were elected, the two respondents were chosen randomly.)

Each respondent was interviewed individually, and interviews normally ran for a period of roughly ninety minutes. The interviews tapped three kinds of information: 1) general background information, such as occupation, income, education, prior political experience, organization memberships, and so on; 2) data on the recruitment process itself, especially the patterns of interaction among participants during each of the three stages of recruitment; and 3) information about the respondents' perceptions of politics and the political process.

The structural data were collected from a variety of sources and provided

a bank of information on the social, economic, and political characteristics of school systems in Ontario. Particularly useful were federal and provincial government documents relating to the census, measures or urbanization, industrialization, racial and ethnic distributions, and the like. Information on school system characteristics, voter registration, election results, political competition, and so on was available from provincial, educational, and municipal offices and officials.

Specification of the school districts under consideration in this study would be incomplete without reference to the nonpartisan nature of municipal and school board elections in Ontario. A nonpartisan election is one in which no political party label appears on the ballot and candidates are nominated for candidacy by a simple petition process. All municipalities in the province share this contextual characteristic. Whether the nonpartisan system eliminates both the active and latent presence of political parties, or the manifest or latent political identities of candidates, is not within the purview of this paper. However, while the separation of partisan political activity and the province's nonpartisan elections is not perfect, it is the prevalent modal condition, at least as reported by the respondents in this study. Only six of the sixty reported that any one of the political parties was the least bit interested or active in their candidacy for the school board. This is not to say that well-defined organized [illegible] interests are not active in the system. In fact, the emergence of slates of candidates in school board elections may very well be the functional equivalent of traditional political party organization.

Findings

The chi square statistic was used to test the significance of the relationship postulated in each of the six hypotheses. The level of significance selected was .05. Each of the hypotheses was confirmed.

Hypothesis 1 stated that: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will be recruited by others to a greater extent than will their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

Self-recruited and other-recruited candidates were identified during the course of interviews with the respondents. Respondents were first asked whether they had been encouraged to run for office by others. Those who answered affirmatively were then asked to evaluate the importance of that encouragement to their decision to run. Those who stated that the encouragement of others was of no importance to them and those who received no encouragement at all were classified as self-recruited. All others were classified as other-recruited.

Table 2 presents the data concerning the relationship in the form of a 2 x 2 table.

TABLE 2

ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND TYPE OF RECRUITMENT

		Type of Recruitment	
		Self	Other
Ecological Structure	Urban/Hetero	21	9
	Rural/Homo	6	24

N=60

$X^2 = 15.151$, df=1

$p < .001$

Type of recruitment was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school district. The data show that candidates in rural/homogeneous

districts tend to be recruited by others whereas their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous districts tend to be self-recruited.

Hypothesis 2 stated that: Sponsorship of school board candidates by incumbents will be practiced to a greater extent in rural/homogeneous school districts than in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

Amount of sponsorship practiced by incumbents, as reported by respondents, was measured by a three-category index. Where a candidate received an explicit invitation to run for office from more than 25 percent of the incumbents, the amount of sponsorship was classified as "much". Where an explicit invitation was received from up to 25 percent of the incumbents, the amount of sponsorship was classified as "some". Where a candidate did not receive explicit invitation from any incumbent, the amount of sponsorship was classified as "none".

Table 3 presents the data concerning the relationship in the form of a 2 x 3 table.

TABLE 3

ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND AMOUNT OF SPONSORSHIP BY INCUMBENTS

		Amount of Sponsorship			
		None	Some	Much	
Ecological Structure	Urban/Hetero	18	7	5	N=60
	Rural/Homo	8	10	12	

$X^2 = 7.257$, df=2

$p < .05$

Amount of sponsorship was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school district. The data show that sponsorship by incumbents is practiced to a greater extent in rural/homogeneous districts.

Hypothesis 3 stated that: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will receive greater campaign support from primary groups than will their counterparts in urban/hetereogeneous school districts. And Hypothesis 4 stated that: Candidates for the school board in rural/homogeneous school districts will receive greater campaign support from secondary groups than will their counterparts in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

Types of support were classified as either financial, manpower (e.g. canvassing), or encouragement and advice. Although intensity of support may be measured by simply summing the number of types of support, such a procedure would ignore qualitative differences. Financial support and manpower typically represent greater commitment than simple encouragement or advice. Accordingly, types of support, as reported by respondents, were classified as weak or strong. Where a candidate received, at a minimum, both financial support and manpower, support was classified as strong. Where a candidate received financial contributions alone, manpower alone, encouragement alone, or encouragement in combination with any one of the other, support was classified as weak.

Table 4 presents the data concerning these relationships in the form of a 2 x 2 table.

TABLE 4

ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND DEGREE OF SUPPORT

		Degree of Support				
		Primary Groups			Secondary Groups	
		Weak	Strong		Weak	Strong
Ecological Structure	Urban/Hetero	19	11	N=60	22	8
	Rural Homo	6	24		2	28
		X^2 = 11.588, df=1 $p < .001$			X^2 = 25.069 (Yates's Correction df = 1, $p < .001$	

Type of support by source was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school district. Patterns of support evidently parallel patterns of instigation. In rural/homogeneous school districts, where other-instigated rather than self-instigated candidacy is the modal pattern, both primary and secondary groups will continue to encourage and support candidates. Alternatively, in the urban/hetereogeneous districts infrequent instigation by others is followed by negligible support from any group.

Hypothesis 5 stated that: Uncontested school board elections will occur to a greater extent in rural/homogeneous school districts than in urban/heterogeneous school districts.

Table 5 presents the data concerning the relationship in the form of a 2 x 2 table.

TABLE 5

ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND CONTESTED ELECTION

		Contested Election		
		Yes	No	
Ecological Structure	Urban/Hetero	13	2	N=30 (School Districts)
	Rural/Homo	6	9	

$X^2 = 5.167$ (Yates's Correction)

df=1, $p < .05$

Whether or not an election was contested was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school district. Electoral opposition characterizes school board elections in urban/heterogeneous districts and is much less typical of elections in rural/homogeneous districts.

Hypothesis 6 stated that: Forced turnover of incumbent school board members will occur to a greater extent in urban/heterogeneous school districts than in rural/homogeneous school districts.

Forced turnover was measured by an index that was based on the number of incumbents who won, divided by the number of incumbents who sought reelection; results were tabulated for three elections. School districts were classified into three groups: those in which a bid for reelection never failed, those in which it sometimes failed but less often than 25 percent of the time, and those in which it failed more than 25 percent of the time.

Table 6 presents the data concerning the relationship in the form of a 2 x 3 table.

TABLE 6

ECOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND FORCED TURNOVER

		Percentage of Forced Turnover			
		None	1 to 24	25+	
Ecological Structure	Urban/Hetero	3	2	10	N=30 (School Districts)
	Rural/Homo	11	2	2	

$X^2 = 7.582$ (Yates's Correction)

$df=2$, $p < .05$

Forced turnover was significantly related to the ecological structure of the school district. Higher rates of forced turnover were associated with urban/heterogeneous school districts.

Concluding Comments

The findings of this study indicate that patterns of school board member recruitment are functionally related to the ecological structure of the school district. The distribution and diversity of the population appear to explain a great deal about the interactions, activities, and events during each of the three stages of recruitment.

While each of the hypotheses in the study was confirmed, several caveats

are in order. The finding that ecological structure is an important determinant of patterns of recruitment still leaves unanswered some basic questions. While not susceptible to adequate analysis in this study, the possibility remains that such factors as political tradition or culture--the previous existence of particular institutions, the impact of certain events, or the existence of particular value systems--may have a compelling effect on the character of the community and, consequently, on the recruitment process. Until more sophisticated techniques and methods are developed, the historical and cultural differences among communities will limit the extent to which environmental characteristics can be quantified for use in empirical models.

Moreover, our differentiation of urban/heterogeneous and rural/homogeneous environments no doubt does violence to the trend to similarity of city and country that has been characteristic of recent decades. The terms were meant to denote ecological differences and to represent not ideal types but two poles on a continuum; that is, there is variation but not discontinuity as we move from one pole to the other.

The crucial link between school board member recruitment and school board member representation was not addressed in this study. But patterns of recruitment may be expected to have a direct bearing on the representational style of school board members and their modes of dealing with issues and problems. The vital linkage between recruitment and representation remains a fertile field for future research.

Notes

[1]Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds. The Politics of the Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[2]Lester G. Seligman, "Political Mobility and Economic Development," in Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development, ed. by Neil J. Smelser and Seymour Martin Lipset (Chicago, Aldine, 1966), p. 344.

[3]For representative classical statements on the role of elites in political affairs, see The Republic of Plato, trans.by Francis MacDonald Cornford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), Chps. V-XIV; The Politics of Aristotle, trans.by Sir Ernest Barker (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), Books III, IV, and V; John Locke, Two Treatises of Civil Government (New York: Dutton, 1951), pp. 257-381; and Thomas Jefferson, "The Meaning of Republican Government," in M. Rejai, ed., Democracy: The Contemporary Theories (New York: Atherton, 1967), 63-67.

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[4]Dwaine Marvick, "Political Recruitment and Careers," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. by David L. Shills (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 273-82.

[5]For a review of representative studies, see Kenneth Prewitt, "Political Socialization and Leadership Selection," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLXI (September, 1965), 96-111.

[6]George S. Counts, The Social Composition of Boards of Education, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

[7]For reviews of representative studies, see Keith Goldhammer, The School Board (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1964); and Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, The Political Web of American Schools (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972).

[8]See, for example, Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools (New York: Wiley, 1958); and Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander W. McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis (New York, Wiley, 1958).

[9]The first programmatic treatment of recruitment as a systemic property was rendered by Kenneth Prewitt and Heinz Eulau, "Political Matrix and Political Representation: Prolegomenon to a New Departure from an Old Problem," American Political Science Review, LXIII (June, 1969), 427-41.

[10]Heinz Eulau and Kenneth Prewitt served as principal and associate investigators, respectively, of the City Council Research Project, Institute of Political Studies, Stanford University.

[11]Lester G. Seligman served as director of a research project at the University of Oregon that investigated legislative recruitment in Oregon. He was assisted by Chong Lim Kim, Michael R. King, and Roland E. Smith.

[12]M. Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler, "Avenues to the School Board and Political Competition," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1972).

[13]Peter J. Cistone, "School Board Member Recruitment: The Case of Ontario," Journal of Educational Administration, XII (October, 1974), in press.

[14]For reviews of such studies, see Robert Eyestone, The Threads of Public Policy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); and Betty H. Zisk, Local Interest Politics (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973)

[15]This discussion of the process of recruitment draws on King, "Legislative Recruitment." The author wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the many valuable suggestions that were offered by Professor King, Department of Political Science at The Pennsylvania State University, during the course of this study.

[16]Prewitt and Eulau, "Political Matrix and Political Representation."

[17]See, for example, James David Barber, The Lawmakers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Frank J. Sorauf, Party and Representation (New York: Atherton Press, 1963); and Malcomb E. Jewell and Samuel Patterson, The Legislative Process in the United States (New York: Random House, 1966).

[18]King, "Legislative Recruitment."

[19]Stanley Lieberson, "Measuring Population Diversity," American Sociological Review, XXXIV (December, 1969), 850-62.

[20]John L. Sullivan, "Political Correlates of Social, Economic, and Religious Diversity in the American States," Journal of Politics, XXXV (February, 1973), 70-84

[21]Sullivan, ibid., employed the sixteen categories and six variables in his study of diversity in the American states.

[22]See, for example, Charles M. Bonjean and Robert L. Lineberry, "The Urbanization-Party Competition Hypothesis: A Comparison of all United States Counties," Journal of Politics, XXXII (May, 1970), 305-21.

[23]Terry N. Clark, "Power and Community Structure: Who Governs, Where and When?," Sociological Quarterly, VIII (Summer, 1967), 291-316.

[24]Richard I. Hofferbert, "Elite Influence in Policy Formation: A Model for Comparative Inquiry," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 1968).

[25]Prewitt and Eulau, "Political Matrix and Political Representation," 437.